



## Focus on safety and health

# Road construction inspections this summer

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**May 2004**

On June 21, 2004, L&I will start conducting more road construction inspections to enforce compliance with safety and health regulations. The goal is two-fold: to prevent injuries and deaths caused by moving vehicles on road construction sites, and to protect workers from hearing loss caused by exposure to hazardous noise levels typically found during road construction.

### Why road construction?

- Working on roadways is a **high-risk activity**. A total of 17 workers have been killed since 1999 while doing construction or utility work on road projects.
- Road construction workers have the **highest rate of hearing loss claims in construction**. At more than \$2 million per year, hearing loss is the most expensive occupational disease for road construction workers. Hearing loss related to noise exposure is a permanent impairment with devastating consequences, yet it is 100 percent preventable.

### What will L&I be doing?

- **Continuing to enforce safety and health rules on road construction sites.** L&I will continue to conduct compliance inspections on road construction projects across the state. The primary focus of these inspections will be to ensure that employers are in compliance with the Noise Control standards, traffic controls meet all applicable requirements and other safety and health standards are implemented.
- **Enforcing a new emergency rule to better protect construction workers from being backed over by dump trucks.** In many instances where road construction workers died, the trucks had operating back-up alarms and no safety violations were found. An emergency rule, adopted May 5, 2004, requires that in addition to the back-up alarm, dump-truck drivers must have either an observer signaling when it is safe to back up or an operable mechanical device, such as a video camera, that provides a full view of the area behind the dump truck. *The department will begin enforcing the new rule on June 1.*

### What do you need to do?

If you employ workers to perform road construction, maintenance, repair or utility work on public roads, you must:

- Assure that your workers are protected from motor vehicle injuries by ensuring that your work zone is set up in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and WAC 155-305, Signaling and Flagging. Also, assure that your employees wear the appropriate high-visibility garments.
- Assess your work sites for noise hazards. If such hazards exist, you must implement a hearing-loss-prevention program as directed by WAC 296-817 and ensure that your workers are trained, wear hearing protection and undergo audiometric testing.
- You should also assess your work site for other safety and health hazards, such as exposure to silica dust.

## Will your work site pass a safety and health inspection?

We're here to help you comply with WISHA (Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act) requirements. **L&I offers free on-site safety and health consultations.** A safety and health consultant from L&I will come to your work site and analyze your employee safety and accident prevention programs. If you have questions or if you would like to request a consultation, please call your local L&I office or 1-800-423-7233 (4-BE-SAFE) and ask for a WISHA consultation supervisor in your area.

### Additional Resources:

- **WISHA (Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act) home page:**  
[www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety)
- **Could your company use a WISHA safety and health consultation?**  
[www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/KeepSafe/Assistance/Consultation](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/KeepSafe/Assistance/Consultation)
- **Noise exposure – hearing loss**  
[www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/NoiseHearing](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AtoZ/NoiseHearing)
- **Safety Training Resources (videos, workshops, online training modules, etc.)**  
[www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools](http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/TrainTools)
- **NIOSH information on work zone safety**  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumazone.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumazone.html)

